

REPORT TO REOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



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PORTFOLIO	Resources and Performance Management
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Sickness Absence – Update

PURPOSE

1. To report on the sickness absence statistics for April to June 2013, Service Unit’s compliance with the Managing Attendance Policy and health and wellbeing initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the sickness days per employee for the first quarter of the year, measured against the agreed target is noted, together with trends, compliance data and activities being undertaken to reduce employee absence and support well being.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. The reduction of sickness absence is a key performance indicator for the Council in order to continually improve performance. In addition to managing attendance the Council has a responsibility for employee welfare which in part can be met by encouraging and supporting employees to look after their own health and well being.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Statistical Data

4. The Council’s sickness absence target for 2013-14 is 6 days absence per employee, set at this level following our lowest ever figure of 5.76 days per employee in 2011/12 and our outturn last year of 7.32 d/e.

The total absence for the April to June quarter is 1.16 days per employee (0.52 days short term and 0.64 days long term). This compares well with the first quarter in 2011/12 (1.15 d/e). Comparative figures are shown on **Appendix 1**. The statistics also show that in this first quarter we are maintaining our lower levels of short term absence, reaffirming the effectiveness of the Council’s Managing Attendance Policy.

Housing and Development Control had the highest sickness absence figure for the quarter, a combination of long and short term sickness in the Unit.

At the time of your last report in March we had 4 employees meeting the long term absence trigger. At the end of June there were 3. All are being managed and monitored by managers, supported by the People and Development Team.

5. Analysis on the absence data continues to be done on a quarterly basis by the P&D Team and reports provided to Management Team. Managers are reminded on a monthly basis of the reports available on HR21 in regard to managing the attendance of their employees. A monthly email goes to Heads of Service to highlight any outstanding SARs and FARs where appropriate.
6. The position at the end of June 2013 was reported to Management Team. Any non compliance with procedures was highlighted for their action.
7. Facilities Management and Housing Development Control have the highest ST absence for the quarter. Finance & Property and Housing Development Control have the highest LT absence for the quarter.
8. Between the period April to June 2013, 296 staff had 100% attendance. This equates to 69.9% of staff. The chart below shows quarterly comparisons for the last two years.

Quarterly Comparison

Quarter	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Q1	69.9%	69.4%	69.9%
Q2	72.8%	65.7%	
Q3	71.9%	65.7%	
Q4	64.8%	60.2%	

9. Causes of Absence

The top cause of absence for April for June continues to be Stress / Depression / Anxiety at 29.4% of the total actual (rather than FTE) sickness figure. Other Musculo Skeletal (17.2%) and Genito Urinary (14.5%) were the second and third highest. Stress and Other Musculo Skeletal related illnesses are consistently in the top three categories in common with other organisations however the volume of these absence categories continues to be at much lower levels than in previous years.

Whilst the percentage of days lost to stress, depression or anxiety as an expression of the absence total, has risen as compared to the last report, the days per employee has reduced (0.39 d/e compared to 0.53 d/e in October to December).

Compliance

10. The People and Development Team provide information and reports to managers. The majority of managers now have ready access to information such as sickness absence records, sickness absence reviews, special and annual leave via HR21, which enables them to better manage their employees' attendance. The People and Development team are on hand to provide additional information, advice and support as required.
11. **Sickness Absence Reviews (SARs)**
At the time of compiling the June statistics, 25 employees (excluding those at the formal stage) were on the review system. There were 4 SAR's outstanding at the time of running the reports and these were reported to Management Team.

12. **Formal Attendance Reviews (FARs)**

Also in June 11 employees were in the formal absence review process. Three FARs were overdue at the time of the analysis and details were reported to Management Team.

13. **Long Term Absence**

Long Term sickness has accounted for 55% of the absence total and is much lower than the same period last year. All employees currently absent long term are being appropriately monitored and progressed. One of these employees is in the managing health review process.

14. **Summary**

Short term absence levels are being maintained at low levels. This is a significant factor in maintaining lower absence levels overall and improving performance in the organisation. It is also evidence of the improved effectiveness of attendance management. The successful achievement of the IIP Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award in the summer of 2012 provides external verification that the Council is effectively managing the wellbeing of its employees.

Long term absence is much lower than the same period last year and compares well with 2010/11 and 2011/12 figures. It is considered that redundancy and performance management/disciplinary issues (stress related illness) impacted on longer term absence levels last year, which have been worked through.

Regular contact, support from managers and the People and Development Team, Occupational Health advice and agreed return to work plans are used as appropriate to assist employees in returning to work as soon as possible.

Compliance with procedures is being monitored closely with Directors and Heads of Service who are advised when it appears management actions have not been undertaken within agreed timescales.

15. **Well Being Strategy and Action Plan**

Following the achievement of the IIP Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award work continues in line with the agreed action plan. In the first quarter of the year the following activities have been arranged or supported:

- Walk to Work Week/Burnley Walking Festival
- Diabetes Week – tests provided for employees
- 10k Run
- Bike to Work Week/Lunchtime bike rides
- Ecotherapy – hanging basket leaning lunch
- Prostate (PSA) tests for male employees (employee contribution to cost)
- Clubs continue to meet on regular basis in employees' own time and supported by our own staff (e.g. Book, Yoga, Camera, Running, Walking, Badminton)
- It's a Goal promotion for Men (mental wellbeing/ cCBT)
- Resilient Thinking and Mindfulness events for all employees and specific service units
- Rounders tournament
- Give blood promotion
- Weekly Weigh Ins

Having been awarded IIP Champion status the Council is also sharing information with other organisations, in the public and private sector around our work on health and wellbeing and the impact this has had on our organisation. A recent meeting was held with First Homes (Oldham) to share our best practice.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

16. Improved employee attendance and employees who are healthy and well enable the Council to have a more productive and cost efficient workforce. Expenditure on health and wellbeing training and promotions is managed from within agreed People and Development or service unit budgets.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

17. The Council's Managing Attendance policy and procedures were last revised in 2010. Associated policies e.g. Grievance, Dignity at Work, Stress Management and Health and Safety policies are reviewed and revised in line with agreed timeframes. The Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan are being delivered as part of People, Law and Regulation's agreed service plan. Policies referred to are available on the Council's Intranet (Hub).

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

18. The People and Development Team are in regular contact with Service Units to support the management of employee absences. Trade Union members are part of the corporate Well Being Group.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

19. Employee records containing exempt information
Previous reports to Management Team and Better Services and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
Managing Attendance policy and procedures
Wellbeing Strategy

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

ALSO:

General information, including statistics and this report can be found on the Hub under "Ask HR"

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